

## **A Homeowner's Guide to Wetlands**

Homeowners in Townsend often wonder about what types of activities are allowed in proximity to wetlands. Townsend's regulations are based on the Mass DEP's wetlands regulations and the town's bylaws, so what types of activities are allowed with or without a permit varies based on distance and potential impact on wetlands.

A good thing to remember, wetlands are where surface water and ground water meet, so any activity in or near a wetland can impact the groundwater you and your neighbors drink.

### **Within 50ft of wetlands**

Most work within 50ft of a wetland is regulated as these types of activities can cause significant impacts to water supply. Often, ground water is just below the surface, so reach out to Townsend's Conservation Agent before proceeding with any activities or work within 50ft.

The only allowed activities without permits within 50ft of wetlands are:

- The mowing of lawns.
- Pruning of established landscape areas, excluding use of herbicides and fertilizers.
- The hand-planting of native trees, shrubs, and groundcover, excluding turf grass.

### **Between 50ft and 100ft of a wetland**

The buffer area between 50ft and 100ft of a wetland is an area where more activities are safe, but some still may need review. Large projects may still cause significant impacts on wetlands if mismanaged, but most work can be allowed with a permit and some commonsense practices.

In addition to above allowed activities, these activities are also allowed without permits between 50ft and 100ft of wetlands.

- Installation and maintenance of fencing, provided it does not constitute a barrier to wildlife.
- Pruning and cutting of trees, provided any felled trees remain on-site and the activity affects less than 10% of the trees in the 100ft wetlands buffer on the property. Stumps must be left in place.
- The repair or replacement of an existing driveway, provided that all work remains within the existing footprint of the driveway.

### **Other activities**

Any activities within 100ft of a wetland not listed above are not necessarily prohibited, they simply need a permit to ensure they are following regulations and commonsense practices.

Contact Townsend's Conservation Agent with any questions and learn more about the process to obtain a permit from the Conservation Commission before moving forward with projects not listed above at [conservation@townsendma.gov](mailto:conservation@townsendma.gov)

Remember, preserving Townsend's wetlands keeps Townsend's water safe and clean for drinking and the enjoyment of all.